



Fw: FL member letter to LPJ on phosphates
Carol Monell to: Doug.Jones

02/23/2011 04:03 PM

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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 16, 2011

Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Administrator Jackson,

Recent published articles indicate that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) intends to conduct aerial radiation surveys of former phosphate mines in Florida. Further research by our staff revealed that the issue being targeted by the EPA has been studied for decades by the Florida Department of Health and determined to be no risk to human health. It is our understanding that the EPA is advocating an arbitrary standard that the ATSDR, in reviewing the standard, stated could be set two orders of magnitude higher and still be protective of human health.

We are writing to express our concerns and request that we be informed of any area-wide aerial surveys currently scheduled or under consideration and that you provide us with this information prior to conducting of any such surveys. Additionally, we are requesting that we receive survey results and other information concerning any prior aerial survey work conducted by the EPA or federal contractors.

Given the extensive research the state has already conducted on this issue, this appears to be a duplicative effort and an inappropriate use of taxpayer dollars. Furthermore, the arbitrary standard advocated by the EPA creates a significant risk of placing an unjustified and permanent stigma over thousands of acres of land in my district. Florida's real estate market is already under significant duress as a result of the economic downturn in our own state. These potential actions by the EPA stand to impede Florida's recovery without any basis in human health risks.

Florida is home to North America's largest phosphate reserve. The phosphate industry plays a vital role in our local economy, providing nearly 67,000 direct and indirect jobs and \$4.3 billion in personal income in the region. We are deeply concerned that these aerial surveys will be far-reaching and will have a negative impact on our phosphate, tourism, real estate and development industries.

In conversations with our local elected officials, our staff has determined that the EPA has made no effort to reach out to local stakeholders. The EPA must proactively communicate and engage with local, state and federal officials in advance of any anticipated aerial surveys in order to explain exactly what criteria will be used and what data will be collected during these flyovers.

Lastly, we would like a face-to-face meeting with you in order to gain a better understanding of the EPA's current viewpoint on the issue of radiation of mined lands. We will be contacting your office to follow up on this request in the coming days.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "D. Ross", written over a horizontal line.


Rep. Dennis A. Ross

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Gus M. Bilirakis", written over a horizontal line.

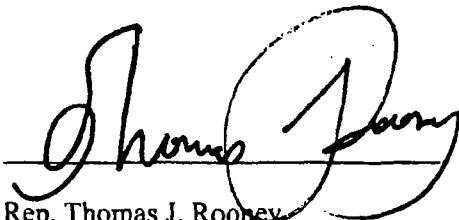
Rep. Gus M. Bilirakis

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Vern Buchanan", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Vern Buchanan

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Richard B. Nugent", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Richard B. Nugent

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Thomas J. Rooney", written over a horizontal line.

Rep. Thomas J. Rooney